

Full Circle

Official Newsletter of VA Butler Healthcare



Reaching Out to Veterans Everywhere

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Perspective from the Director

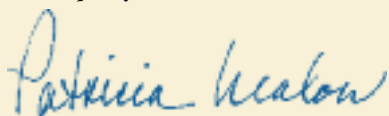
THIS PAST YEAR WAS A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY, with many positive outcomes and accomplishments affecting both Veterans and employees. With these successes, VA Butler continues to fulfill its mission to put Veterans first and to reach out to Veterans everywhere, now and in the future.

One of the biggest accomplishments for 2009 has been the progression of the Community Living Center (CLC) which is continuing along the cultural transformation journey from a medical model of care to a resident centered model. Enhancements continue to be made such as a buffet meal system implemented through Dietetic Services that enables residents to have a choice at meal time. And, both residents and family members participate in the Steering Committee to ensure that a resident-focused environment is the first consideration when making decisions about the Veterans quality of living while at the facility. The new Community Living Center has taken shape and now has visible walls and roof. Sometime in the fall, we hope to open the first 30 beds of the CLC. This will be an exciting time and Veterans will be able to enjoy the homelike atmosphere, amenities and the privacy of having their own bedrooms.

Another notable accomplishment was the renovation and relocation of the Adult Day Health Program to a larger, more accommodating and comfortable space. This new location makes not only programming easier; it also affords the department the opportunity to enroll more Veterans into the program.

Mental Health Programs, led by our professional staff, continues to expand. Specialized services for Veterans include motivational interviewing, increased programming for post traumatic stress syndrome and substance abuse. VA Butler was able to obtain additional housing vouchers for homeless Veterans, and a new program for incarcerated Veterans was initiated during the year. All of these enhancements and new programs improve access to specialized care for our Veterans.

The successes of VA Butler Healthcare this past year would not have been possible without the commitment, dedication and perseverance of its staff, volunteers and community friends. Our goal is to meet the expectations of a new culture of Veterans and to be flexible and adaptable in our approaches so as to ensure that the individual, diverse needs of these Veterans are met. As Director of VA Butler Healthcare, I am pleased to present this year's Annual Report which highlights in fuller detail the programs, services and initiatives that had a significant impact on Veterans accessibility and quality of care.



Patricia Nealon
Medical Center Director

Mid-December 2009, Veterans, staff and community members gathered for the dedication and opening of VA Butler Healthcare's 5th Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania located at Freedom Square, 1183 Freedom Road, Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania, 16066, phone number 724-741-3131. Performing the duties of color guard and raising of the flag were members from VFW, Post 879. The clinic will be managed by contract service provider Valor Healthcare, Inc., who will provide primary care, lab, and radiology services. VA Butler staff will provide behavioral health services. A grand opening is planned for the spring of 2010.

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Stats

(as of September 30, 2009)

Number of
Employees

634

Number of
Volunteers

607

Number of
Volunteer Hours

46,130

Number of
Veterans Served

17,666

Number of
Outpatient Visits

127,545

Number of
Inpatients Treated

949

2009 Capital Asset Projects

VA Butler Healthcare invested 8.8 million dollars of stimulus funding during fiscal year 2009 towards upkeep and improvement projects at its 88-acre campus.



The funding and ability to award these projects enabled the facility to fast-track these much needed infrastructure improvements that otherwise would not have been possible. These improvements are necessary for the sustainability of facility operations and to maintain the integrity of services provided to our nation's heroes—primarily to ensure a safe, healthy and comfortable environment to the thousands of Veterans who walk through its doors each year. "We were extremely pleased to have received these monies to help with facility improvements," stated Patricia Nealon, Director of VA Butler Healthcare. "We were able to get many needed projects awarded, started or completed earlier than anticipated." The stimulus funds were used, in part or whole, to support the following projects:

- *Electrical System Upgrades (Phases 3 & 4)*
- *Community Living Center (CSI Phase)*
- *Replace Boilers*
- *Improve Site Drainage*
- *Renovate Water Tower*
- *Replace Windows (Building 1)*

An additional 8 million dollars was used for other construction, renovation and improvement projects. These projects were: demolition of old buildings,



sanitary plumbing upgrades, electrical system upgrades, main loading dock renovation, steam line repair, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) upgrades, new electronic signs, interior/exterior door replacement, replacement of building two elevator, fire protection upgrades, and replacement of the main kitchen floor.

Financial Update Fiscal Year 2009

(October 1, 2008 to
September 30, 2009)

Operating Expenses

Salary/Benefits	\$46,331,000
Medicine	\$ 8,295,000
Other Supplies	\$ 5,882,000
Services	\$11,168,000
Other Expenses	\$22,644,000

Total Operating Expenses \$94,320,000

Revenue

Appropriated	\$90,166,000
Medical Care Cost Recovery	\$ 4,154,000

Total Revenue \$94,320,000

Reaching Out To Veterans Everywhere

VA Butler Healthcare 2009 Mental Health Program Expansion

Behavioral Health has continued the expansion of mental health programs in fiscal year 2009 - both within the main facility and at the Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). There is Mental Health staff at all of the CBOCs at least once a week. Veterans are able to get an appointment within 14 days of the date they requested an appointment 98% of the time. Staff have received training in Evidenced Based Therapies and are utilizing these methods to improve the therapy choices available to the Veteran. The following are some of the Behavioral Health special emphasis programs that were implemented in fiscal year 2009:

1.

Veterans Justice Outreach

This newly established program is for Veterans involved in the legal system. The goals of the program are prevention of homelessness, diversion to the VA system for services and a reduction in recidivism. The program provides education, advocacy, care coordination, and case management.

2.

Department of Housing and Urban Development VA Supportive Housing (HUD/VASH)

This program offers permanent housing vouchers through the local county housing authority for Veterans who meet the criteria for homelessness. The program includes education, care coordination and case management. Butler received the first distribution of 35 vouchers in fiscal year 2009. All of the vouchers have been given to Veterans. VA Butler was given an additional 15 vouchers, and to date, 11 have been distributed.

3.

Mental Health Intensive Case Management Rural Access Network for Growth Enhancement Program (MHICM RANGE)

This high intensity program provides intensive case management services to seriously mentally ill Veterans in rural areas. The goal of the program is to reduce inpatient psychiatric hospitalizations and enhance quality of life. The MHICM-RANGE program began in fiscal year 2009 with three Veterans and now has 14 Veterans in the six counties served by VA Butler. The program team members work with the veterans to increase medication compliance, keep clinic appointments, and encourage socialization.

Proactive Customer Service Approach

VA Butler Healthcare implemented a new approach to improving service and satisfaction to Veterans, linking employee satisfaction with veteran satisfaction. This new approach involved identifying a Customer Care liaison and “teaming up” with the Patient Advocate to proactively identify factors that affect customer service outcomes. The program focused on initiatives to promote Veteran and employee satisfaction, advocacy, tracking and trend analysis, education and training, service recovery, outreach, enrollment, and recognition. Some of the accomplishments during the year were:

- Coordinated VALor (VA Led Outreach and Reeducation) campaign to increase enrollment via improved market share of Veterans of all ages, expanding Priority 8 and OEF/OIF Enrollment, and reeducating eligible Veterans about the new VA. Developed VALor e-Committee and Enrollment Toolkit available on SharePoint to enhance employee understanding, communication, and collaboration
- Creation of HERO (Healthcare Employees Reaching Out) program to recognize employees for high service and exemplary customer service. During the year, 491 HERO awards were presented
- Decreased eligibility inquiries by 50% from FY-08 to FY-09
- Increased staff compliments by 88% from FY-08 to FY-09

Implementation of Centralized Call Center

Recognizing the need for improved telephone access for Veterans, VA Butler Healthcare implemented a Centralized Call Center on April 13, 2009. The Call Center assures that Veterans are able to directly reach a member of the staff when they have questions for their primary care team, need to make an appointment with their primary care provider, cancel and reschedule their appointment, or speak to the main pharmacy. The phone lines of all primary care health technicians and pharmacy technicians are forwarded to the call center. The Call Center operates Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is staffed full-time by a Registered Nurse and four Medical Support Assistants. Veterans can access the call center by calling the toll free number, 1-888-266-9040.

The implementation of the call center has had a positive impact on Veteran Satisfaction and call efficiency resulting in: a decrease in the number of phone calls; a significant improvement in the call abandonment rate; and, a decrease in the number of telephone-related patient complaints. Additionally, this new program has enabled health technicians to make appointment reminder calls that have resulted in a reduction of the number of calls from Veterans with questions about their appointments. Since the call center was activated, to date there have been no issues recorded by the Patient Advocate with regard to “calls not returned or answered” at the main facility.

VA Butler Healthcare 2009 All Employee Survey

VA Butler Healthcare achieved a completion rate of 92% with the FY 2009 All Employee Survey (AES) – 4.9% increase in participation over the 2008 survey. The completion rate was the highest facility rate in VISN 4 and was one of the top completion rates in the nation. The facility hosted a luncheon on the opening day of the survey, providing a computer classroom for individuals to complete their survey – with over 50% participation on that date alone. The facility scored significantly higher than the national average on 12 of the 13 Job Satisfaction Indicators, 16 of the 20 Organizational Assessment Indicators, and 3 of the 4 Culture indicators. The results indicated that the most significant increases in satisfaction occurred in the areas of pay satisfaction, senior leadership, and satisfaction overall. The facility exceeded all goals set by the committee and surpassed the national goal by 12%.

2009 Accomplishments

Improvements: Patient Advocate Report

	Average Days Res.	Cases >7 Days	Total No. Issues	Total No. Complainants	Total No. Compliments
FY 2008	9.6	154	503	385	9
FY 2009	2.3	32	470	354	17

Reduction in Complaints, Increase in Compliments

ISSUE	FY 2007	FY 2008		FY 2009		2 Year Change
Compliments	12	9	-25%	17	+88%	+41%
Staff Courtesy	50	42	-16%	44	+4%	-22%
Eligibility Issues	109	118	+8%	62	-47%	-43%
Access To Timeliness	151	126	-17%	62	-51%	-59%
Delay in Scheduled Test	13	8	-38%	1	-87%	-92%
Phone Calls Not Returned	51	70	+37	16	-77%	-69%
Appt. Time Misunderstood	19	7	-63%	4	-43%	-79%

Improvement In Call Handling Efficiency

	ACD Calls Offered	ACD Calls Handled	ACD Calls Abandoned	% of Calls Answered
Total Calls - Pre Call Center (September 2008)	7508	3078	4430	41.0%
Total Calls - Call Center (September 2009)	4447	4306	141	96.8%

Reduction In Telephone Related Complaints

	FY 2008	FY 2009	Complaint Reduction
Patient Advocate Reported Issues			
Access To Timeliness	126	62	51%
Phone Calls Not Returned or Answered	70	16	77%
Appointment Time Misunderstood	7	4	43%

All Employee Survey Outcome Comparison

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Participation Rate	86%	92%
VISN Ranking	4	1
Most Significant Increase	Job Control	Senior Leadership/Pay
Total Areas Higher Than National Average	31	28
VA Butler scored the 5th highest participation rate in the nation.		
VA Butler exceeded the national goal by over 6%.		

VA Butler Healthcare Expansion of Non-Institutional Care Programs

In 2007, Central Office created Average Daily Census (ADC) targets for Non-Institutional Care (NIC) in Home and Community Based Care and Care Coordination Home Telehealth (CCHT) for each facility and VISN. These have been included into each Director's Performance Measures. The Non-institutionalized Programs that are provided at VA Butler Healthcare include: Adult Day Health Care (ADHC), Home Based Primary Care (HBPC), Homemaker Home Health Aide (H/HHA), Home Hospice, Outpatient Respite, and Purchased Skilled Home Care (PSHC) Programs. The CCHT Program has been in existence at Butler since 2004 and recently a full time CCHT Mental Health Coordinator was hired to extend the CCHT Program into rural areas. The ADC target set for this facility for the NIC Programs for FY 2009 was 175.86 and 98 was the ADC target set for the CCHT program. In October 2008, VA Butler Healthcare's 2009 NIC ADC target of 175.86 and the CCHT ADC target of 85 had already been met and exceeded. The Director increased the NIC ADC target to 235. As of 9/30/09 Butler's NIC ADC was 229.48 and the CCHT ADC was 110. At 92% of the target, it was considered to be met. This was accomplished by creating significant growth of the H/HHA program from an ADC of 35 to an ADC of 56.5 – expanding this much needed service to more veterans with no increase in FTEE. VA Butler Healthcare has already exceeded the NIC FY 2010 target of an ADC of 197.85. With further expansion and the addition of a full time CCHT Mental Health Coordinator it is expected that CCHT ADC target of 139 will be met (or exceeded as well).

VA Butler Healthcare Non-Institutional Care Programs and Workload

- Adult Day Health Care
- Home Based Primary Care
- Home Maker/Home Health Aid
- Home Hospice
- Home Respite
- Care Coordination Home Tele-health

	FISCAL YEAR		
	2007	2008	2009
Average Daily Census	212.45	290.54	337.34
Patients Treated	482	597	685



VA Butler Decontamination Team Assists VA Pittsburgh in Support of G-20 Summit

The VA Pittsburgh Health Care System (VAPHS) and VA Butler Healthcare combined efforts and resources to prepare for any emergent unexpected event which might have occurred during the G-20 Summit held this past fall in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Members of VA Butler's decontamination team deployed to the Heinz campus of VA Pittsburgh on Wednesday, Sept 23, 2009. The Summit brought in high-ranking officials from member countries to Pittsburgh on September 24 and 25. Due to protest demonstrations that have occurred at previous G-20 meetings, the western Pennsylvania hospital community planned for, and was prepared to respond to, possible scenarios that would put a stress on the local healthcare system. This had the potential of impacting the normal system function well beyond the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, possibly impacting counties throughout western Pennsylvania.

The VA Pittsburgh team, coordinated by Dr. Michael Dresser, set up operations at its Oakland Campus and VA Butler's decontamination team set up at VA Pittsburgh's Heinz Campus. Directed by Marlin Price, decon team leader and Fire Chief for VA Butler, the team's equipment provided an outdoor mass-casualty system capable of decontaminating ambulatory and non-ambulatory casualties. The purpose of the system is to protect staff and patients in the event of an off-site incident potentially involving chemical, biologic and radiological substances, which may involve mass casualties.

The primary goal of the Veterans Health Administration's comprehensive emergency management program is to ensure the health and safety of patients, visitors, and staff, and to provide for the continuity of care of VA patients and essential operations in the event of a disaster or emergency.



VA BUTLER

Staff Raise Over \$68,000 For Charity

EACH YEAR, Federal agencies across the country rally together in support of local and national charitable organizations through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) program. The CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign, with more than 300 CFC campaigns throughout the country and internationally raising millions of dollars each year. Pledges made by Federal civilian, postal and military



donors during the campaign season (October 1st through December 15th) support eligible non-profit organizations that provide health and human service benefits throughout the world.

VA Butler Healthcare just completed its 2009 Combined Federal Campaign, collecting a total of \$68,018, with \$62,023 from payroll deductions alone. In addition, various fundraisers were held during the campaign including a department theme basket and TV drawing, hoagie sale, pepperoni roll sale, and a spaghetti luncheon. The total collected from the campaign was 36% over the facility's goal of \$50,000.

"In a strained economic environment, VA Butler employees rose to the challenge and generously contributed



to agencies struggling to meet the needs of their community members," commented Amy Friel Capretto, Social Work Executive and 2009 CFC Co-Chairperson.

The success of the CFC is due to the generosity of the employees and the commitment of its chairpersons and committee. The 2009 VA Butler CFC Chairpersons were Amy Friel Capretto and Cherie Clamidori, Assistant Chief Engineer. For their efforts, both were selected by the 3



Rivers/Pennsylvania West CFC as a 2009 Local Hero Award recipient for the Department of Veterans Affairs and was recognized at a special award ceremony on January 8, 2010. Clamidori stated, "We are honored to receive this award and

share it with the committee members who worked tirelessly to help us reach our goal and beyond."



The 2009 CFC Committee members were: John Bridges, Mike Cole, Chris Diamond, Terri Doctor-Fratto, Michelle Dominski, Greg Green, Lorain Hesidenz, Doug Hilliard, Jim Laidlaw, Susan Leslie, Sue McElhone, Connie Pakutz, Bonnie Raybuck, Betty Savannah, Barb Taylor, Jim Torok, Danielle Weisenstein, Patty Wilson, Lorri Yerkins, and Tom Lewandowski.

Thank you!

2009 Happenings



During National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week 2009, VA Butler Healthcare received a donation of \$13,000 from the staff and contractors of Turner Construction. Each year, the staff of Turner Construction selects a charitable organization or cause to support, and this year it was hands down the Veterans. The donation was used to renovate the pavilion area making it more accessible and usable for Veterans.

Colonel Timothy Frank, Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment Liaison to the Department of Veterans Affairs, presented Certificates of Appreciation to Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Care Management staff at VA Butler Healthcare in Butler, Pennsylvania, Tuesday, September 1, 2009. Pictured (left to right) are: Patricia Nealon, Director, VA Butler Healthcare; Terence "Tod" Conner, OEF/OIF Outreach Coordinator, VA Butler Healthcare; Colonel Timothy Frank; William "Bill" Smathers, OEF/OIF Transition Patient Advocate; and Richard "Buzz" Bryan, OEF/OIF Transition Patient Advocate.



It's A Home Run! VA Butler Healthcare and the Butler Pennsylvania BlueSox hosted a Veterans Appreciation Night and **3rd Annual Welcome Home Celebration** on Tuesday, June 16, 2009, at Pullman Park located in Butler, Pennsylvania. BlueSox players visited with the Veterans and signed autographs for them. Veterans were also treated to a tail-gate party, t-shirts and hats sponsored by IBIS Tek. It was a fun filled night of watching the "ole ball game" with family and friends.



Posing left to right are Patricia Nealon, Director, and Patricia Landgraf, Housekeeping Aid Supervisor, Environmental Services, who received gold awards in the categories of Professional/Supervisory and Technical Trades & Crafts at the **2009 Federal Women of the Year Awards Program** sponsored by the Pittsburgh Federal Executive Board (FEB) Federal Women's Program Committee. The program recognizes those women who have made significant contributions in their workplace and who lead by example.

